

PACIS  
OCTOBER - november 1983





# The Bishops' Pastoral - what it Doesn't Say.

by Richard Cleaver

I have developed a love-hate relationship with the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace. (Those readers who know me well will no doubt nod sagely; such a confession of emotional involvement with Church documents will only confirm their deepest suspicions of my mental instability.) I have wrestled with it all summer, wanting to work out my reactions on paper, but the Letter has proved too complex for easy handling. My fear is that the very complexity of this document will prove to be its downfall. After all is said and done it leaves plenty of space for "business as usual" at the Pentagon. But then again in a culture where the testimony of "experts" has replaced Scripture as the final word on all subjects, perhaps what appears to me to be a flaw will be perceived as its strength. What is a Catholic Worker to do with these thirty-two closely printed pages?

Of course, the first thing a Catholic Worker notices is that this is not anything like a pacifist document-- not that there is anything surprising in that. It leaves us with plenty of work still to do. Peter Maurin's clarification of thought must go on. There are two basic areas in which this is most urgent-- two places the Letter falls short of what Peter and Dorothy considered the heart of the Christian message, the "dynamite of the Church". This question of pacifism is one. The other, a prior shortcoming in terms of this document, is the question of Christians, the "world" and the State.

The steps taken to produce "The Challenge of Peace" have been well-covered in the secular press. Many hours were spent with "experts" and considerable dialogue, some of it public like William Clark's letter as head of the National Security Council (or whatever evasive term is in vogue these days), was carried on with the U.S. government.

First, the question of "experts". Part of the error of our age is the downgrading of common sense. Part of the power behind the rapid spread of the disarmament movement in the last two or three years has been the reassertion of common sense over the "expertise" of the war establishment, which is more and more plainly leading us down the primrose path to destruction. No doubt the drafting committee believed that considering the perspective of the "experts" would both give credibility to their position and clarify their thinking. But the "thinking" of the war establishment serves only to befuddle. Too much exposure to it leads the mind into byways and makes the picture look more complicated than it is. This is the militarists' strategy for making horrible new forms of war acceptable to the public. The use of misleading words like security, deterrence and defense distracts us from the consequences of our actions.

For example, the bishops seem to have taken at face value the U.S. government's assertion that the military exists for defense. (At least before World War II we had enough official honesty to call it the War Department.) Even a very cursory examination of our foreign policy in the last two or three decades will reveal that the military-- we are pleased, in another bit of self-deception, to call it a "peacetime" force, and even "the Service"-- exists chiefly to intervene in places where we have no business. I correct myself-- where we do have business, Big Business that lives off the blood of brown, yellow and black workers while depriving people in this country of any job at all, however dehumanizing.

This is the kind of confusion "experts" (whose job is to make war more and more businesslike and cruel-- and I mean conventional as well as nuclear war, as last year's use in Lebanon of dreadful weaponry from such all-American firms as Honeywell in Minneapolis shows) deliberately sow. And total annihilation is the whirlwind we soon may reap. What Christians must do is reaffirm the fact that the question of modern war is not a complex question at all. It is perhaps the simplest question that faces us today. It is wrong, unreservedly wrong, and it is wrong to prepare for it, to spend for it, to remain silent in the face of it. It took no "experts" to tell Paul VI his message to the UN. It took only the teaching of Christ, whose Vicar he was, and the message was utterly clear and simple: "No more war, no more war!"

Ah, but how are we to achieve it, ask the "experts". This is where, we are told, by the bishops as by others, people of good will may differ. Indeed, people of good will may differ on this point, but according to Jesus, his disciples cannot. This is one important reason why Catholic Workers believe Christians must not be mixed up with the State. It is on this point that the Pastoral causes me the most distress. The State is founded on coercion and violence. It had its origin at all times and in all places on the apparatus of war-making. Its heads have most often been war chiefs. It has not hesitated to kill its own citizens, either by sending them into battle or through its law courts. And yet the State has become such an idol



that the bishops, shepherds of the flock, cannot see around it. In producing this document they took the pronouncements of its high priests on an equal footing with that of Popes, Councils and theologians. It is in the nature of priests of idols to do everything and anything to ensure their dead idols' existence. Is it the proper nature of priests of the Living God? And yet we are urged to consider the preservation of our country as a Christian duty, though Jesus assured us that his Kingdom was not that kind at all. The bishops even refer to the "virtue of patriotism"-- though I remember no such thing among the lists of Seven Cardinal Virtues, Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Three Theological Virtues or Fourteen Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. I am afraid I lose patience in the presence of such a phrase as "virtue of patriotism". I am perhaps better off not dwelling on it any longer, except to point out that if Jesus never mentioned it, it wasn't because "he lived in a different time". On this point, his time was no different from ours. Patriotism was the Roman virtue, by Jesus' time surpassing even gravitas, soberness and moderation. And it was the high priests, embodiments of Jewish nationalism, who said it was expedient that one man-- Jesus -- die for the sake of the nation.

All very well, we pacifists will be told yet again, but doing nothing won't be able to preserve peace. The bishops' letter at last recognizes that "non-violence is not passive about injustice and the defense of the rights of others; it rather affirms and exemplifies what it means to resist injustice through non-violent means". They are not able, however, to regard it as sufficient. Their acceptance, however skeptical and conditioned, of the doctrine of deterrence shows they regard it as necessary to fill up the "gaps" left by non-violence. (This may be based on their sense that preservation of the State is necessary for continued Christian life.) In this connection I would just mention Daniel Ellsberg's statement, based on a passage in Richard Nixon's published memoirs, that only nonviolent action in the streets, by signalling an adverse public climate to increased warmaking, prevented Nixon and Kissinger from using atomic weapons on North Vietnam.

This deficiency of faith and imagination on the part of our bishops must be laid at our door. While proclaiming the Good News that war and violence have no place of their own in our lives, we Catholic Workers, and other Christian pacifists, have not painted clearly enough our vision of how this can be practiced in a world we know to be corrupted by human sinfulness. Fortunately, the

(continued on page 4)



## via pacis

VIA PACIS is published every two months by the Des Moines Catholic Worker, Box 4551, Des Moines, IA 50306. Telephone 515-243-0765 or 243-7471. We maintain Lazarus House of Hospitality at 1317 8th St., a temporary shelter for women, couples and families, and Monsignor Ligutti Library and Peace and Justice Center at 1301 8th St.

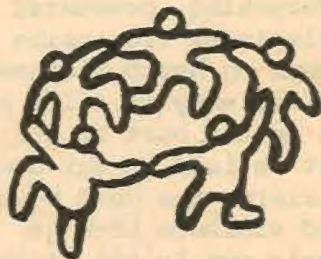
## community

Norman Searah, Jim Harrington, Maggie Olson, Patti McKee, Donna Henderson, Russ Simmons and David Stein.

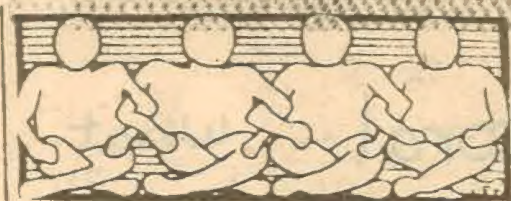


## MASS

We continue to celebrate Mass every Friday at 7:30 PM. There will occasionally be a discussion afterwards. Everyone is encouraged to come.



2



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOVEMBER 12

March on Washington to stop US intervention in Central America and the Carribean. Contact November 12 Coalition, Box 50131, Washington, DC 20004.

REFUSE THE CRUISE

Canada/US Solidarity Days  
December 2 & 3, 1983.

The US plans to test the air-launched Cruise missile in the Canadian province of Alberta. On December 2 & 3, people all over North America will join to show opposition. Contact:

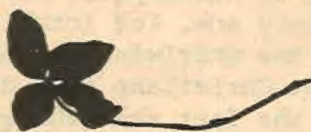
END THE ARMS RACE  
1708 West 16th Ave.  
Vancouver, BC, Canada V6J2M1

CANDIS

10 Trinity Square  
Toronto, Ont., Canada M5G 1B1

PEOPLE'S TEST BAN- National  
Clearinghouse

PO Box 42430  
Portland, Oregon 97242



HOUSE OF BREAD & PEACE

Evansville, IN, needs \$\$\$ to buy house for soupline, shelter and peace work. People needed too. Now serving meal at St. Paul's Epis. Ch.; help needed there too. Contact Sr. Joanna Trainer 718 First Ave., Evansville, IN 47710.



On October 31 there will be a Truckers' Conference at the Des Moines Area Community College in the conference center, building 7. The keynote speaker will be Victor Priesser, former director of Iowa DOT, along with panel speakers Rick Howe, Ed Lowe and Joy Fitzgerald. The theme of the conference is "Trucking in the Real World".

There is a registration fee of \$18.00 which includes lunch and coffee breaks. There is no charge for the morning session. Many topics related to trucking will be talked about. For more information contact George Fitzgerald, 515-967-5114.

## OVER- WHELMING NEED

As summer ends, our community is finding its needs greater than ever. The long hot summer kept us so busy that we had almost forgotten that a long cold winter will be coming all too soon. With the winter season comes winter needs and we turn to you, as our only support, to meet the needs of the children of God who come to our door.

The dry summer may have been a curse for the crops but for the staff and guests of the Monsignor Ligutti House and Peace and Justice Library it was a blessing. Our poor old house has a tremendous leak in the roof, but when it doesn't rain, it doesn't leak! Patty lived all summer in dread of rain, because her ceiling leaks in three places. Each time it rains, every garbage can in the house can be found under a drip-drip-drip. Our friendly roofer has yet to give us an estimate, although three have looked at the roof and said they don't have the right equipment for such a high, steep roof. Unfortunately, we have put the problem off as long as we can and each storm gives us more concern about the ceilings which are leaking. The summer weather has cooperated in our struggle, and now, we come to you for help!

With winter coming, we are in desperate need of large rolls of plastic, duct tape, and wood strips to insulate the many windows of the Lazarus and Ligutti Houses.

This summer we had a tremendous water bill, \$320, the result of more baths and showers and the occasional sprinkler party for the kids. This winter the gas bills will be the killer. We do all we can to reduce our heating bills, but our houses are big and old and, as the cold drives people to seek warm shelter, the doors are opened more often to greet new guests and to see past guests on their way.

Our old FORD truck saw quite a summer. We are convinced it enjoys the attention it gets at the shop, which is why it keeps insisting on going back! Early this summer, the truck visited the shop for a tune-up, but turned out to be in need of some major engine repairs. Then the FORD decided it needed new tires which resulted in the discovery of another major problem in its front-end. Drop another two

(continued on page 11)

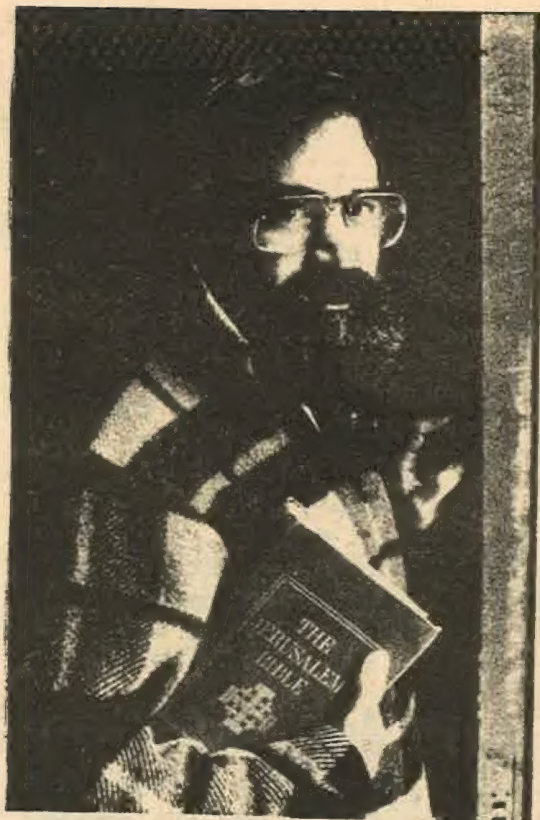


# dear friends

by Frank Cordaro

Greetings from the North Country. Been here three weeks and can't say I'm settled and am wondering if I'll ever be settled. Luckily, seminary is only a temporary state, not an end in itself. Before I get into what's happening to me I'd like to plug the needs of the C.W. in Des Moines. Donna tells me they are scraping the bucket for cash. Since moving into Lazarus House the guest flow certainly did not level off, only intensified. The added space almost doubled our capacity to serve. We are seeing over 1,000 people a year instead of the 600 we saw in the old house. The added numbers add to the needs. I know all summer we were trying without much success to fix the badly leaking roof of Ligutti House and get some playground equipment and basketball hoops for the vacant lot next to Lazarus House. Property taxes came in this fall and they could only be partially payed. The coming heat bills will choke a horse and the upkeep of the truck and bug are constant. The group at the house have been doing an excellent job since I left but its hard to replace a hustler. Please be generous to the needs of this appeal.

The campus of St. John's U. is set out in the country among trees and lakes. Five miles from St. Ben's College (the women's school) and the town of St. Joe's; St. Cloud is another 20 miles away. It is the See City for the diocese. Every place here is named after a saint, the whole area being heavily German Catholic. The school is very expensive, costing close to 8,000 dollars for a full year. I didn't have a great expectation when I got here but I still have been struck by the affluence of the place. This Catholic university, like most Catholic universities in this country is entirely too rich/upper middle class/male dominated/white/corporate/military oriented and utterly unaware! Having said the worst and the worst being true there are signs of hope. For close to two years now there has been a discussion on campus about doing away with ROTC. Last year the president of the college appointed a committee to study the issue. They were asked to answer this question: "Does the sponsorship of ROTC at SJU constitute endorsement of values opposed to the Christian and Benedictine character of the University?" After long study and much input the committee, by a six to two majority said yes, "sponsorship of ROTC constituted endorsement of values opposed to the Christian and Benedictine character of the University." Now we will see what the president does with this report. Some undergrads have started weekly silent vigils in the center of the campus with a banner-- "ROTC at St. John's? NO!" I've been working with those folks. We hope that as the weeks go on, more and more will join the vigil. But it is going to be an uphill struggle. The campus alumni are heavily influenced by the ROTC grads.



The clearest example of the university's complete numbness to the issue might have happened this weekend. Last Thursday we got wind of a Chemistry and Physics seminar being given by a St. John's alumnus. Dr. Jere Night graduated from St. John's U in 1933. He went on to get his PHD from the U of Minnesota. From there Dr. Night joined the efforts at our National Labs spending the better part of the last 33 years working at Los Alamos in nuclear physics. A number of us from the school of theology went to his seminar. We discovered his life's work has directly contributed to every nuclear weapon this country produced up to the mid-60s and indirectly contributed to every n-weapon since. Much to our shame, we also discovered the reason Dr. Night was on campus was to receive an award from the university for his distinguished life's work in the field of nuclear physics-- a BOMB MAKER!!! Can you imagine? This Saturday at the luncheon banquet where Dr. Night received his award, nine of us from the seminary dressed up in our Sunday best. (I put on a tie and coat for the first time in nine years. See, Mom, the seminary has already made an effect on me.) We held three banners; two with quotes from the popes and one stating the fact: "St. John's U honors the bomb when it honors Dr. Night". We stood silently along the side of the wall in clear view of everyone. The president of the University, Father Thimmesh, OSB, came over and said we were well within our rights to be there and welcomed us individually. A great way to meet the President. Then when the time came to give out the awards Fr. Thimmesh dutifully gave the award to Dr. Night, a bomb maker. We certainly are a far distance from putting into practice the Bishops' Pastoral on Peace. For those who think such activity might take me away from my main purpose up here-- studies and priestly formation (though I would think this sort of effort is what formation is all about)-- I'm doing okay. I have two scarment classes and a field experience. I've got a good spiritual director. Also keep your ears open; I've been talking to some folks who are planning to start a Catholic Worker in St. Cloud.... the Spirit is moving and the movement is growing. Peace to all, with much love.

## BEYOND IDEOLOGY

by David Stein

This is written during the international furor, dominating the media and the public consciousness, over the shooting down of the Korean Air Lines plane by a Soviet pilot, resulting in the death of 269.

I have been at many demonstrations against militarism, usually American, and almost invariably a passerby will ask vehemently, "What about the Russians?" This is a good question, and one which we in the peace movement are often guilty of evading. I despise the ideological apologism whereby the left (I will call it that for lack of a more concise label) will ignore or minimize the crimes of the various Communist regimes, much as the right will do in regard to the crimes of the regimes in El Salvador, Chile, South Africa, etc. If truth does not always fit into ideology, our allegiance is to truth.



The military aggression and political oppression of the USSR are glaring and undeniable facts.

This most recent event of the destruction of the airliner is a crime that cannot be rationalized without doing grave violence to all honesty.

Unfortunately, though, in the wake of the airliner tragedy, it has become harder than ever for people of conscience in this country to raise their voices against the warlike actions of the non-communist countries, many of them clients of the USA, without being drowned out by the shouts of What About The Russians.

In Christian Europe during the Middle Ages and afterwards, all evil in the world was ascribed to a being called the Devil. Any act of violent murder, torture, burning alive, was considered justified if committed against one believed to be in league with the Devil. In fact, if a person had an enemy, all he or she had to do was point a finger at that person, accusing him or her of collaboration with this ultimately evil being, and the accused would be put to death in the most grisly manner.

In our country, in our time, Communism and the Soviet Union have replaced the Devil in this role. If our President wants to punish the people of Nicaragua, for instance, for struggling to break free from our own economic and political domination, he invokes the old nightmare image of the Russians coming to conquer our hemisphere. An examination

(continued on page 7)



# Reflections from the Living Room

by Donna Henderson

I sit in the living room with a book in hand, pretending to be reading. I am not reading, however, I am pondering our guests. I watch the interactions between community members and guests, and guests and guests. Their situations and their problems-- many and varied-- their condition-- merely human.

What is it to be created in the image of God? Certainly it has little to do with fingers and toes or arms and legs, or even intelligence or the lack thereof. Surely, the handicapped child is as much created in the image of the unseen God as the child I consider perfect. My own intelligence sometimes appears to me to be an insurmountable hurdle to my recognition of God within me, my own mastery of a variety of social skills an obstacle to wholeness, my own provisions for psychological defense a barrier to my recognition of Christ in others.

What is it to touch God? Is it tradition and ritual or is it tears and laughter shared between those created in the image of God? Certainly it must have more to do with a realization of the pain of the human condition than a knowledge of liturgical rubric.

The human condition... to dwell on it deeply is to venture to the depth of despair, even with out the thought of physical pain. The recognition of the emptiness of what I do and the endless search for who I am teases my mind into attempting an answer.

I find but one way out of the philosophical morass, a way which curiously seems closed but to a few, and often enough to me: the contemplation of God within me. When I am far from the awareness of myself, I am, strangely enough, always feeling far from God, and in the same way, far from Christ. When I become so wrapped up in what I must do, or what I am convinced I need to do, I lose the context in which

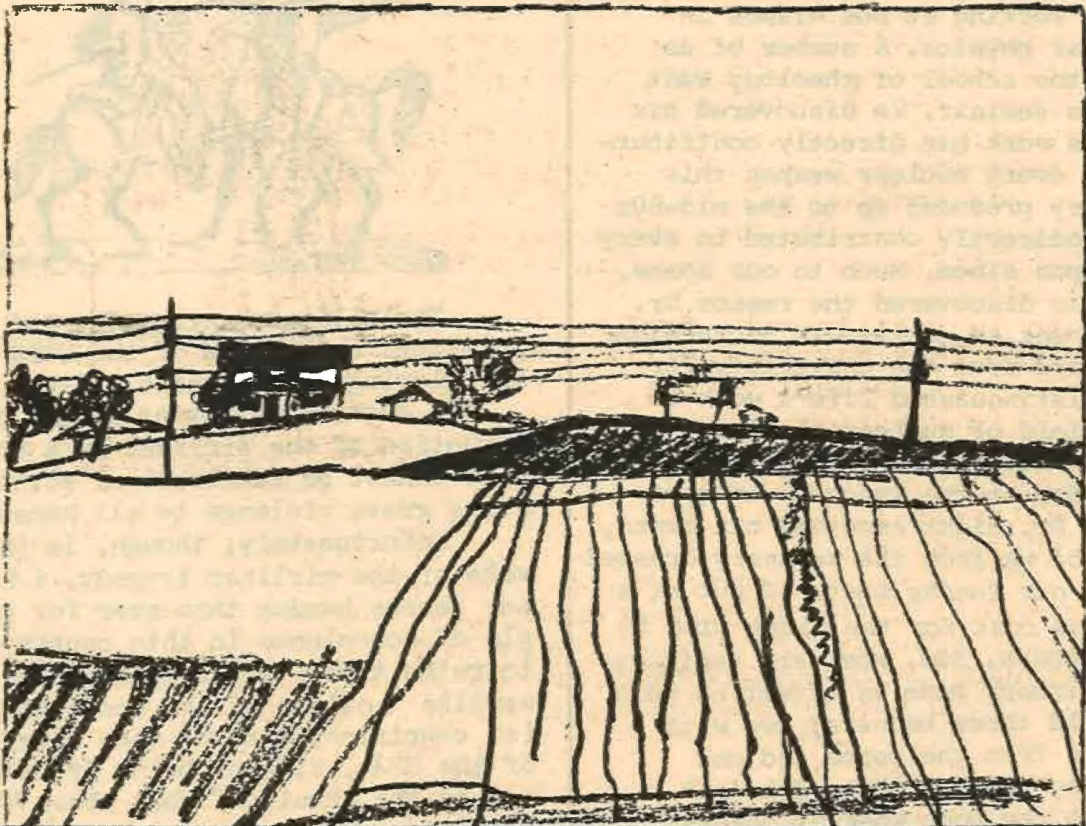
I do anything. Like a plot without a setting, the actor and the act are disconnected, moving yet without apparent direction. At this point I have usually confused "what I do" with the more important "who I am".

"Who I am" is a question usually left to dreamy college sophomores but it is not one which relegates itself to any particular period in one's life. To ponder it is to ponder the very reason for my existence, to give in to the soul's desire to meet its creator, to surrender to the image of God within me.

In Western society, "what I do" is usually a sufficient answer to most people's inquiry into "who I am" but what I do is not who I am. What I do is the reflection of who I am, but neither the answers nor the questions are identical. Whatever I do, no matter what I might do, is a hollow shell if who I am is not its foundation.

My mind returns to the Lazarus House living room, to people who do not and may never know what it is to ponder the image of their Creator within them, to people whose energies are exhausted with meeting basic human needs. It is not that they do not suffer the pain. They suffer from the human condition and pay the price of others who seek to deny their human condition with material goods. They are denied the opportunity to indulge themselves with material goods, or even material needs. They, denied the recognition of their birthright to human dignity, must struggle to meet basic human needs.

Was my introspective journey relevant to my relationship with our guests in the living room? To ponder God within me is to marvel at God in others; to recognize God in myself is to perceive God in others more clearly; to love God more fully is to serve God in others more completely.



## THE BISHOPS' PASTORAL-- WHAT IT DOESN'T SAY (continued from page 1)

bishops acknowledge the importance of this work, and urge it upon us. They admit theirs is merely the beginning of a "new theology of peace". As a beginning, it has much to praise. It calls official U.S. war policy into question on terms the world understands-- indeed, twenty years ago one would hardly have imagined U.S. bishops rebuking the government at all. Its opening section, in its beautiful and clear and succinct exposition of the development of biblical doctrine on war, brought me close to tears. Our task as Catholic Workers must be to use it

to move ever closer to what the Vatican Council called for, and the bishops are working for, "a completely fresh reappraisal of war". This document, though, is not that completely fresh reappraisal. Its flaws are many and we must make it our task to challenge them, holding fast to the Good News of Jesus. What it will take is simplicity and risk and firmness and clarity. But we have plenty in our tradition to draw on as we move ahead. As Peter Maurin said, what we seek is "not new, but so old it looks like new". It is the Peaceable Kingdom. ++++++





# Home \*

by Maggie Olson

When you live at the Catholic Worker you see lonely people every day. People who are without family and friends. When we encounter lonely people, we cannot help but reflect on the blessings of supportive, loving family and friends.

Christ instructed us that, with God as our Father, we are all brothers and sisters with Him. This is not simple even when we interact with family and friends, even harder when we deal with strangers and yet harder with our enemies.

But I say this to you who are listening: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Luke 6:27-35

The dictionary defines enemy as "one who is hostile, the foe". How often do we encounter hostile people? They may be hostile for a variety of reasons but, in my opinion, the most common reason is a lack of self worth. How can we possibly expect those who are alone and lonely to feel good about themselves? When one feels unloved, one may feel hostile: when one is hostile one can become the enemy, and although it's hard to love our enemies, we have been commanded to do so.

Greg Cusack in a National Catholic Rural Life Conference magazine article once wrote, "Sound families are the cornerstone of a viable community. It is through loving families, wherein members accept responsibility for the caring and nurturing of each other, that people receive their basic support and image of self-worth. In such families children learn of responsibilities as well as privileges, duties as well as rights-- concepts vital to the preservation of a wellordered republic. We need wise public policy to support and encourage such families." Greg goes on in his article to suggest a solution, "My recommendation for a beginning would be to change our exclusionary posture to one of inclusion. Let us begin by seeing that we are all, whatever our circumstances, family to each other. Let us begin to call all our lost and lonely home to the family table. In that way we, as a reunited people, might salvage our threatened families."

Do we have any idea how desperate people are for love? How alone they are? When we thank God for our families and friends, we need to go one step further and embrace the world as our family, our enemies as our friends. When we take the time to get to know people, we may still disagree, but by knowing Christ in them they become familiar, they become less hostile, less unloved and more family.

What we do here at the Worker is not unique, but it needs to become more common. If we truly desire to follow the teachings of Christ, if we desire to live the Gospels instead of merely reading them, we would change our lives to become family to the world. To become brothers and sisters to the unloved, and to our enemies. When you hold someone, anyone, in your arms you can not possibly hate them. Christ touched even the untouchables, we must do the same.

## HOSPITALITY

by David Stein

I stood on the soupline in front of St. Francis Center in downtown Chicago with perhaps 80 or 90 other men, waiting for the door to open. It was pouring rain. I was lucky enough to be the possessor of a yellow vinyl Girl Scout issue poncho. It was very small on me; I could barely fit my head into the hood. Some of the other men held tattered umbrellas against the wind, some held soaked newspapers over their heads, and some merely shivered bareheaded and in shirtsleeves.

A small man standing beside me spoke up and asked if he could get under the poncho with me. I could not but agree, and we huddled there together. There were a few chuckles on the line.

Finally the door to the soup kitchen opened and we all gratefully trooped inside. As we ate our soup and bread, the little man asked me if I had a dry place to stay that



night. I replied that I did not, but I was sure I'd be able to find a doorway or something. He told me in vague terms of a place he had, and told me I would be welcome to go home with him that night.

After supper he led me down Michigan Avenue for what seemed like a very long way, through the wind, rain and bustling commuters. Then we followed the railroad tracks still further until we came to an old abandoned trailer, lying on its side amid the weeds. It was completely open at one end and the roof (actually a side wall) leaked disturbingly in a couple of spots. My host had carpeted the floor (another wall) with cardboard and newspapers. There we slept, awakening at times to listen to the storm worsening outside. Fortunately the trailer's open end faced west toward the railroad tracks, and the wind was from due north, as is common in Chicago. Thus the night passed without great hardship.

When I awoke in the morning the sun was shining and my host had already left, gone to the Chicago Tribune to try to get a few hours' work selling papers on the street.

A king with a palace could not have given better hospitality. You who live in palaces, what are you waiting for?



# WELFARE & PERSONALISM

by Jim Harrington

There is a story about St. Francis of Assisi, which may or may not be true, but its inherent moral, in my judgement, makes it worthy of repetition.

As the story goes, Francis, in his youth, was quite a party-goer. Returning home from one such event he encountered a leper who was begging along the road. As was required, the leper wore a bell to warn people against personal contact with him.

Francis stopped his horse, reached for his purse and was about to throw it to the beggar, as was his usual practice. But this time Francis dismounted, walked up to the leper, embraced him, wrapped his cloak around him and pressed the purse into the beggar's hand.

The beggar, through his disfigured face, smiled at Francis. Francis went on his way but after a short distance looked over his shoulder. There he saw standing, not the diseased beggar, but Jesus Christ.

This story illustrates in a way the personalism advocated by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in their vision of the Catholic Worker movement. Lazarus House, like Catholic Worker houses everywhere, tries to foster this ideal of personalism, albeit our practice is most imperfect.

As a former paid professional social worker, over the years I have had many experiences working intensively with people who are in need. But in the one year I have lived as a volunteer in Lazarus House, I have seen more personalism, practiced more personalism and learned more about the concept than in all the years I served as a paid professional.

Here our relationships are not usually intense or long-term. Mostly they are simple, but we share. If our food is good, we share that. If it is all starch, we share that. If we're crowded, we share that. If someone gets upset, we share that. If someone gets good news, we share that. To the extent we have the capacity to do so, we share our lives. That's what personalism is all about and it positively touches guests and staff alike.

There is something simple, perhaps sophomoric, but true, about the idea that homelessness would be eradicated if people who had homes would open them to those who don't, or that poverty would be abolished if those who had too much would share with those who had too little. What would happen if the able-bodied provided for the disabled, or the intelligent shared with the retarded?

This kind of personalism is an ideal to be pursued but I'm pragmatic enough to believe it is not going to be realized overnight. In the meantime Ronald Reagan assumes

the millenium is here when he justifies retrenchment of public welfare payments for the disabled, the jobless, the poor, the homeless, the unskilled, etc., on the premise that churches, and others in the private sector, will pick up the slack on a volunteer basis. That isn't happening. Ronald Reagan is wrong and millions of people suffer as a result of his errors.

To contend, as many do, that we simply do not have the money or resources in this society to collectively provide, at a level of decency, for the basic needs of those who cannot provide for themselves, is hypocrisy or at best sheer ignorance.

Even if we grant our political leaders the prerogative of pursuing an abhorrently costly and morally insane arms race, this nation still has the capacity, if not the will, to eliminate deprivation.

To illustrate this point, Sales Management's "Survey of Buying Power" reveals that the Effective Buying Income (that is personal income remaining after taxes) in the Des Moines area is approximately \$11,000 per person. That is per person, not per household.

Thus if this after-tax income was equally shared, the effective buying income would be over \$40,000 per family of four. But obviously income is not anywhere close to being equitably distributed in this country. Nor has any significant progress been made in this direction since the government began keeping such figures nearly 40 years ago. In spite of all the changes that have taken place--enormous economic growth to a current three trillion dollar GNP, periods of war and peace, periods of inflation, periods of recession, periods of high employment, periods of high unemployment, periods of new social programs, periods of social stagnation, etc.--none of this has changed the maldistribution of income. This continues with the top 20% of our population having over 40% of the income while the bottom 20% struggles to survive with 4 or 5% of national personal income. In Des Moines 18.5% of the households have after-tax incomes of less than \$10,000. The best off of these families are near poverty and many are deeply engulfed in it.

These are cold, hard statistics but their meaning in human terms was translated for me by two comments that recently came to my attention. The first was from a boy newly arrived with his family at Lazarus House. After his first meal he said gratefully, "That was really good pizza even if it didn't have any meat in it." The second is a quote from a Des Moines Register article describing a business meeting at the Des Moines Marriot Hotel. "The opening buffet on Sunday night offered such a choice of rich food that it was termed almost obscene by some." Let the contrast speak for itself.

Nearly 100 years ago a bishop by the name of John Ireland said this to a gathering of the faithful: "Go then into the streets and bring charity to the suffering. But what is needed more than charity is justice."

Our welfare system is not designed to alleviate injustice but our political leaders would have us believe that it prevents deprivation and degradation. It fails, all too often, in even this meager goal.

Personalism involves a pursuit of justice while welfarism does not. Thus the collective efforts that people make to support our welfare system can never be a substitute for the personalism advocated by the Catholic Worker.

But until such a time as the ideal of personalism takes firm hold on a larger scale, our welfare system, including public and private programs, is the best instrument now available to protect threatened and impoverished people against hunger, homelessness and other basic survival problems.

Soup lines, missions, used clothing stores, welfare offices, etc. do nothing to promote justice. Rather, their very existence reveals the widespread injustice that continues to permeate our society. These efforts to meet basic needs are necessary, however, and reflect our society's attempt to be charitable, in a corrupt sense of the word. I say corrupt because only rarely are these services rendered to the recipients with the accompanying love, affection and tenderness that the real concept of charity embodies.

For as long as this society must use a welfare system as a means to fulfill our responsibility to our fellow man, the least we can do is see to it that the system functions in a way that does not ignore the God-given dignity of those who must turn to it in their needs.

In the next issue of *Via Pacis* I will try to describe how policies and practices in the operation of our so-called "safety net" of human services lead to humiliation, degradation, rejection and subsequent embitterment of many whose unmet needs force them to turn to our welfare system for relief.

We at the Catholic Worker see the unhappy results every day.





# OLIVE BRANCHES & GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY or - RISKING WAR FOR WHAT?

by Mike Colonnese

(Mike Colonnese is a frequent contributor to our pages on Central American matters. He lives in Mexico.)

Where is the Reagan Administration's hardline, insensitive and insane policy against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua taking us? Maybe Americans are not all that concerned, but here, closer to the reality, Mexicans fear that the militaristic Reagan approach may lead to war between Honduras and Nicaragua at any moment. The commission appointed by Reagan with Kissinger as its lead architect doesn't make any sense. By the time the commission is to turn in a report the war might start and end (next December). While Reagan sends Stone on jaunts and Kissinger on a new mission, all purportedly designed to seek peace, he continues with the CIA backing for the contras, he sends warships and an aircraft carrier to Nicaragua's shores, he continues to send arms to El Salvador, he further arms the Honduran army and sends American marines to that country. These are not peace measures nor are the work of Stone or Kissinger peace measures. They are smoke screens and it seems as if the American public is buying them.

WAR IN CENTRAL AMERICA WILL BE A FAR GREATER THREAT, A GREATER DISASTER, THAN ANY SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT COULD EVER BE IN REAGAN'S MIND.

If war breaks out between Honduras and Nicaragua (and the Hondurans are doing everything they can to provoke it) then the US will have no choice but to become involved. We have taken a (albeit weak) democracy in Honduras and turned it into a right-wing dictatorship, and are putting that country back a few years in the development of democratic institutions. Everything Reagan does seems to be counterproductive to democracy.

Depending on Washington's participation and the threat to Nicaragua, Cuba would almost surely be drawn into the conflict, at least in some degree.

(Cuba could not abandon a sister country in the area nor should it. Then Cuba's participation in the conflict would influence the Soviet Union's response; even if it were only to lend arms and supplies, it would lead to a direct American-Soviet confrontation that no one wants except, it seems, Mr. Reagan. And if the boys in the Pentagon are advising him toward such a confrontation then they have lost their marbles also.



A war between Nicaragua and Honduras would be worse, far worse, than anything that might be achieved by it. Even if the Nicaraguan government could be overthrown, which surely would not be done without Cuban and Soviet intervention having first been overcome, the Sandinistas have made it clear that they would resume guerilla warfare and perhaps foment it throughout the region. What other alternative could remain? They are committed to a free society-- free from exploitation be it internal or external. Military intervention would achieve nothing. It would result in thousands and thousands of unnecessary deaths (as if any killing were necessary!). It would usher in a time of turmoil for years. No one wants a war. Yet, since the military pressure that Reagan is placing on Nicaragua (through the Honduran military and the contras) clearly risks such a war, it's fair to ask what that policy can achieve that can be worth the risk.

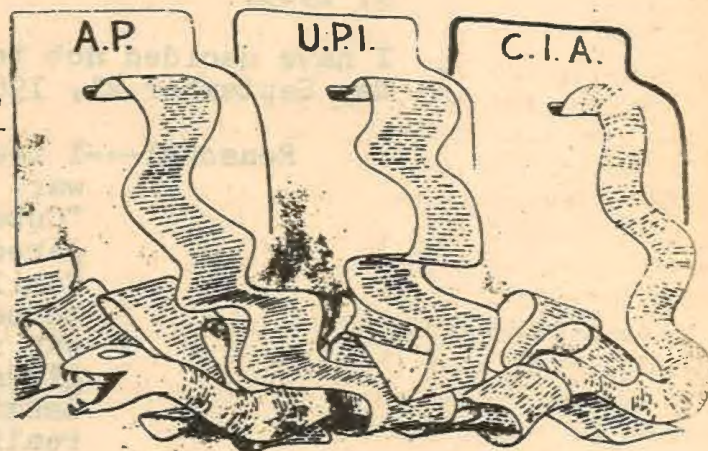
-- Stopping the flow of arms to El Salvador?

Even if Washington had been able to produce a shred of evidence that the flow is of substantial importance to the Salvadoran freedom fighters, there might be better ways of handling that than military attacks on Nicaragua that could bring on a general war. I just recently spoke to some combatants. The only arms they have seen were American arms which were either captured in battle or purchased from corrupt military officials of the Salvadoran army.

-- Forcing the Sandinistas toward a more pro-US policy?

Well, Mr. Reagan will never achieve that with his military aggression. As a matter of fact, just the opposite is occurring, not only with Nicaragua but with people of other nations as well.

So what is Mr. Reagan's goal? Where does his Nicaraguan policy lead? Americans had better investigate very soon and decide whether they want to follow him, whether they will permit him to embroil us in another war which produces nothing but the wholesale death of not only people abroad but Americans as well.



## BEYOND IDEOLOGY (continued from page 3)

of history and current conditions shows how little the Russians really have to do with what is happening in Central America. (Needless to say, the Soviet government uses the USA to play the role of their Devil. It is a convenient arrangement.)

How, then, are we as people of conscience to respond to such an act as the destruction of the KAL plane? First, I am encouraged by many of the nonviolent actions taken in the West, such as the commercial pilots' boycott of the Soviet Union; boycott is a classic form of non-violent resistance. I also support the refusal of American longshoremen to unload Soviet ships; I live for the day when they also refuse to load American arms shipments to the third world.

Let the USSR's latest act of brutality be the spark for creative forms of resistance around the world; let it not serve as an excuse for more militaristic stupidity.





# MAGGIE GOES BACK TO SAC

Maggie Olson  
Catholic Worker House  
1317 8th St.  
Des Moines, IA. 50314

September 21, 1983

Richard C. Peck, US Magistrate  
United States District Court  
Omaha, Nebraska 68101

Stan Green, US Probation Officer  
403 US Court House  
Des Moines, IA. Iowa 50309

Dear Sirs:

On the back of the Conditions of Probation paper it reads "I have read or have had read to me the above Conditions of Probation. I fully understand them and I shall abide by them" signed by me August 9, 1983.

I have decided not to abide by the Conditions of Probation as of today September 21, 1983. The reasons are as follows.

Reason#1---I feel very strongly that we are approaching nuclear war. When I was a military dependent during the "Cuban Crisis of 1962", I and my family were prepared to die. It was my understanding that my family was given cyanide tablets, by the military, to be given to the children in the event of nuclear war resulting in radiation poisoning. We weren't given a choice whether we wanted to live or die, our destiny was in the hands of the government. In reality our life or death should only be in the hands of our Creator.

Reason#2---As a mother of two teenage sons, I do not want to see my sons have to fight and die for what the government determines is a "just" cause. I want to see them live their life by the Gospels, according to the will of God.

Reason#3---I would hope to effect the thinking of military personnel and their families, mothers, workers in factories making war materials or war related products. Actions speak louder than words and by my actions I want to proclaim our right to peace and life.

Reason#4---I work with the poor and our nuclear-arms-dominated economy takes food, medical attention and homes from the poor. I try to help in whatever small way I can, but the nuclear madness will eventually even take their lives. I am my brothers keeper, all mankind is my family and I plead, in God's name, for my family. I want to live, they want to live.

Returning to Omaha to participate in non-violent, civil disobedience by trespassing onto Offut Air Force base seems to be the only means appropriate to display my actions against the threats of war. This base in particular is personally appropriate because I recieved my first I.D. card there, as a military dependent.

Therefore Stan and Judge Peck, I can not abide by the Conditions of Probation because I feel committed to a life of peace and must be guided by my conscience. I also realize your positions and I pray you too will be guided by your conscience.

Peace:

*Maggie Olson*  
Maggie Olson

8

(Editor's note: Maggie will re-enter  
the SAC base on October 8)



# Two Sides of a Coin

Russell Simmons

When the strategic question of implied duties to the government was raised, Jesus asked them to show him a coin.

Flipping the coin, he said: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and render unto God that which is God's."

His statement has been twisted to mean just about everything one might wish to suggest. But it seems there is one simple lesson none should miss: there are two opposite sides, back to back. One may be Caesar, but most assuredly, the other is always God.

Caesar is not accounted a greater weight, either. Government is not a greater institution in our lives as Christ and our duty to him. The furthest one can argue is that government may approach some level of equality. But it is never greater!

I was recently presented with a question of duty when I received my "final notice" from the selective service, telling me that my name was about to be turned over to the Justice Department for prosecution. (This process would mean that J.D. would file an eventual indictment, which would be sent down to the Southern District U.S. Attorney, Dick Turner).

Since those first days of registration at the Post Office during the hot Summer of 1980, I have come to perceive my duty to be two-fold. Like the two sides of a coin.

When most people talk about duty, they think on three levels: duty to one-self, duty to one's country, and duty to one's family, community, church, etc.

I think there is a problem here. We assume that somehow duty can be construed as a justification for selfish responses --- that we have some "duty" to put ourselves first, think of our own lives, etc. In the '70s, we legitimized selfish lifestyles to a degree that it has become our number one national priority: help me.

Duty to one's country cannot be considered without realizing just what country we are in and what freedoms and duties that entails. At least in theory/statement, we are given the obligation to be in control of our policies, rather than being controlled by tyrannical policy-makers. We are given attendant freedoms,

most of which there is some struggle to initially establish. But the route for change is provided, even if it is only the vague declaration signed in the brooding days of a revolutionary war. The "theme" is that we have a duty to forge our government's behavior, and that if that government is abusive, that duty is greater.

Our duty to God is no less great. We have an obligation to live out the Christ within, no matter what the personal (and some would add, societal) costs. In a country that pays lip service to religious observance, this lifestyle is of the greatest relevance.

Therefore I ponder, when would this administration or any recent administration be forced to call a draft? Only in an unlikely European invasion by the Soviets (this would quickly escalate to nukes, and is therefore not a very probably Soviet plot), or --- more likely --- an unending, spiraling commitment in the Central Americas.

In the case that casualties climb after large-scale troop involvements bring US boys to the Salvadoran-Honduran-Nicaraguan-front line of battle, volunteers will quickly drop off, and it will be harder for the administration to find bodys to send (which makes sense, in the eyes of those who like to live).

The present registration will most likely break ground for a central-american draftee war, fought by lower and middle class boys from states like Iowa and cities like Des Moines. When the war hawks call that draft, you can bet that it will be in the midst of hoopla and allegations that heighten tension and cause loyal but unwary citizens to "rally around the President."

That's why Vietnam took 11 years. It takes us so long to realize that it's all bullshit. Like Tonkin Gulf.

If we have a duty, therefore, we should exercise it promptly, upon the first sign of danger, lest we entrench ourselves and find it impossible to reverse the course we are led upon.

Registration is the first step. It is a direct question to our youth. They say it is our duty, but in dealing with duty, we must ask: what duty, and to whom?



## Ft. Benning Actions

Most of you have probably heard about the daring escapades of Fr. Roy Bourgeois, Fr. Larry Rosebaugh and Linda Ventimiglia, who have recently been sentenced.

We will give a brief recap of the events up to this point, to refresh our minds. One day this summer they entered the Ft. Benning base dressed in military garb and spoke to some of the Salvadoran troops being trained there. They also entered the Salvadorans' barracks and left pamphlets written in Spanish calling on them to cease waging war against their people. The three were apprehended and received ban & bar letters. The following day they were back, this time in clerical garb, again leafletting to the soldiers. Again they were detained and again released.

A third time they entered the base. This time they hoisted a PA system into a tree on the base, climbed into it and continuously played a tape of Archbishop Oscar Romero's final sermon before he was killed, in which he called on the Salvadoran army's men to lay down their arms and refuse to fight against their countrymen. It took a few hours to get them out of the tree. No doubt the tape had a resounding effect on at least a few of the soldiers there. After their act the three were arrested and held in the county jail.

On September 15 they were sentenced. Fr. Bourgeois got 18 months, Fr. Rosebaugh and Ms. Ventimiglia 15 months. Letters to any of them can be addressed in care of Casa El Salvador, 2422 19th Ave., Columbus, Georgia 31901 and will be forwarded to wherever they are being held.

*"They can kill me but they cannot silence the voice of justice."*

Oscar A. Romero



# Welcoming a Veteran Home

by Norman Searah

Now, I never went to Vietnam, I came close--how close I'll never know. The reason I say this is because I feel it is about time we welcomed the veterans home from a war that people didn't want.

Someone once said that war, any war, is hell, and that wars will never end, but I feel that we must put an end to wars.

Often I ask myself, "Why did we go to Vietnam?" I lost a few good friends, both to Vietnam and to Canada. Some felt we had no right to be fighting there; others felt we had to stop the Russians from taking over the world. "Aren't we also trying to take over the world by our construction of more and more weapons?"

Someday, I would like to go to Russia, that is if I can find someone who is willing to pay my way. So I can learn about the people and how they feel about war.

But, back to the Vietnam veteran . . . How do you welcome someone home after they've been home or so long?

What do you say? If we don't know what to say to the Vietnam vet, what do we say to the next group of vets that come home? Will they too have to welcome themselves home?

For many that came home alive the war lives on in their minds. For others, the nearest veterans' hospital may be their home for life. And then, there were those who returned in coffins. Some honor the dead for giving their lives in battle, and yet the Vietnam War was never labelled a war, neither was Korea. Will Central America be called a war?

It is time for us to find ways to put an end to wars and to prevent wars. I have no answers to end wars or even how to prevent wars, just thoughts. Perhaps, if we could put an end to our hate. Our celebration of Christmas brings a deep unity with others and a wish of peace on Earth and good will towards men, perhaps we could celebrate it every day, every moment, every second.

So, Vietnam vet welcome home!



INX / JEAN-FRANCOIS ALLAUX

# We Confront Social services



by Jim Harrington

Mike Sprong, who left the Catholic Worker staff last spring to take a VISTA spot with Cross Ministries, is working hard to alleviate the plight of the homeless.

Mike has brought together a coalition of groups and individuals directly involved in providing shelter and other assistance for people without homes. This group, with Rev. Robert Cook of Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church serving as spokesman, met with the Polk County Board of Supervisors last week to present their concerns.

Policies and practices of Polk County Social Services reflect an attitude of "let someone else do it" when it comes to providing help for those without homes. Rev. Cook expressed the coalition's belief that Polk County Social Services should take a more basic and lasting role in helping homeless people back into permanent living arrangements.

The Polk County Director of Social Services concedes that county assistance is limited but says there is not enough money budgeted to provide more. Anyway, he adds, "A single, able-bodied person should be able to scrounge something up in two weeks."

At present, single individuals and childless couples can be assisted by the county for a maximum of two weeks in a year while families with children can receive a maximum of one month's support per year.

Rev. Cook says this is not enough help in today's economy. We at the Catholic Worker agree and look forward to the County Supervisors' response to the coalition's request for a greater participation and commitment by the county in meeting the needs of the Homeless.



hundred dollars. Its latest ploy for attention was the brakes: "New shoes," it said, "new shoes!" Even at this very moment, the truck is at the shop bathing in the attention of the mechanic. The community's latest major expenditure was the mandatory liability insurance on the truck: drop another two hundred.

This summer saw the demise of our VW Bug, an invaluable asset for one and two person trips to town, but, alas, all good things must come to an end, and, on the 8th Anniversary of our community, the Bug took its final gasp and expired. Even before its death, the Bug was in need of more attention than we could afford to give it-- it was the Bug or us: the decision was unanimous. (One friend of the house, who shall remain unnamed, has suggested a mo-ped to replace the Bug. The community wanted to let him know that we think its a fine idea!)

The property tax bill came in August and was due in September. The taxes this year came to a grand total of \$748

and, to be honest, we don't have it. We don't even have enough to pay one-half of it. The great number of large bills, during a traditionally dry period in donations, has drained our accounts and we are in desperate need of money.

We are always in need of basic food stuffs: sugar, bread, milk, etc. Lately, we have had many people come to us for food because their means are simply inadequate to meet the needs of their families. They come in desperation, having no money, no foodstamps, and little hope, but our pantry goes through the same cycles as our bank account and the need has overwhelmed our resources.

On a lighter note, we thank everyone who assisted us with smoke detectors. We now have a smoke detector on every floor of the Lazarus House, our guest house, and we are feeling much better. The Ligutti House still needs two, one in the basement and one on the first floor, and, for additional protection, we would like to put one in the long hallway to the guest bedrooms in Lazarus House.

The Community invites each and every one of you to join us for dinner, at 6:00 pm each and every evening, and for our Eucharistic celebrations at 7:30 pm on Fridays. We ask you to remember us in your prayers which are your greatest help to our Community and God's work among the poor in Des Moines.

## community



by  
Donna  
Henderson

The end of the summer brings a few changes to the Worker Community. We anxiously await the arrival of a new member, Nick McNamara. Nick is originally from West Des Moines, and was, until recently, studying at St. John's University. Nick comes highly recommended by Frank Cordaro whom he met while at St. John's.

We are also waiting for Cindy Blake to join us. Cindy is a staff member at a local group home for retarded adults. Cindy will be coming to join us in November, and, although she will continue to work eight-days-on and six-days-off, she will share her life with the guests and staff of the Catholic Worker.

Norman Searah, a long-time member of the Catholic Worker Community, has decided to trade city-life in for the peace and quiet of a nearby farm for the next six months. Norman has been living on the farm of Greg Fitzgerald for the last three weeks and has become involved in the issues of the independent truckers. Norman has been returning to the house to visit on the weekends and we hope that his decision to stay on the farm does not mean that he will not continue to bless his with his presence on many weekends.

Frank Cordaro is finally off to seminary. The Community enjoyed his regular visits for lunch and dinner and his presence at our Friday liturgies this summer. We wish him the best in his present studies. In all matters regarding the priesthood, however, we only pray that he follows the Lord's will for him in his life.

On September 21st, the Community and many friends went to Ames to hear Mike Colonnese on one of his visits to the States. Mike is working with the Belize refugee relief project to start a hospital near the border. Mike brought pictures and the experience of having lived in El Salvador and his present life in Cuernavaca, Mexico, to share the pain and suffering of the people of Central America. Mike

writes regularly for the Via Pacis and it was nice to hear him in person and to meet him.

Maggie Olson, a member of the Worker Community, has decided to return to Offut Air Force Base, the headquarters of the Strategic Air Command on October 8th. She is presently on 9 months probation after her refusal to cooperate with Air Command police after she crossed the line on August 7th. She is leaving her fate to the judge and could receive up to six months for her return.

Jim Harrington, Mike Sprong, and Russ Simmons have been working diligently on the homelessness issue. Bob Cook recently presented a statement on the same issue to the County Board. The problems of the homeless are not only immense but they are also many. Those serving the homeless are taxed far beyond their meager resources.

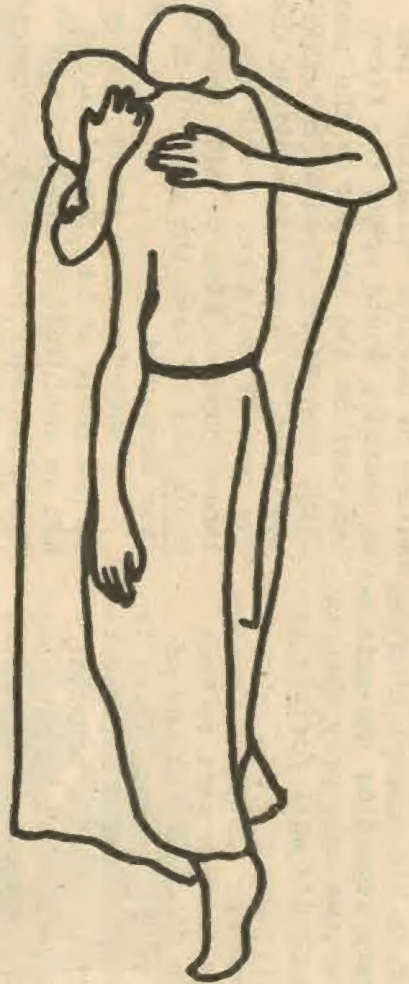
Jeanne Richards, a member of the Brethren Community which serves in the Kindred House soup kitchen, and Patty McKee are laying the foundation to starting a free health clinic in the neighborhood. Patty is on her way back from the Fellowship of Reconciliation Conference and I am sure she will bring back a wealth of information on a variety of peace issues and, of course, news from friends of the House.

David Stein just returned from a three-week vacation in Chicago. Before anyone is misled as to the nature of David's "vacation" let me clarify, David spent the first ten days on the streets of the great city, then David moved on to visit the Catholic Worker Communities for the rest of the time. David returned just in time to edit the Via Pacis and to save the rest of us from burn-out!

I have begun to become active in the choir at St. John's parish and am anticipating the start of the basketball season as the coach of the grade school girls' team. I enjoy getting out of the house occasionally and parish activities are usually light enough that I can come home refreshed.







"Here our relationships are not usually intense or long-term. Mostly they are simple, but we share. If our food is good, we share that. If it is all starch, we share that. If we're crowded, we share that. If someone gets upset, we share that. If someone gets good news, we share that. To the extent we have the capacity to do so, we share our lives."

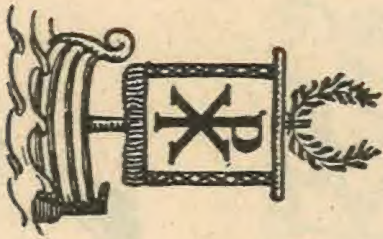
47A PACIS

DMGW-----/Diocese of Des Moines

PO Box 4551-----/PO Box 1816

Des Moines, IA 50306

515-243-0765



Marquette University  
Memorial Library -  
C.W. [Archives]  
1415 W. Wisconsin Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Non-profit organization

U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit 22

Des Moines, Iowa

Address correction requested